

#### OPPOSITION TO SOVIET SCHEMES

and affiliated organs began to publish vivid descriptions of conditions prevailing in the Soviet zone of occupation, as veil as protests against expulsions, deportations, or killings of Iranians in that area. The Soviet Embassy was accused of undue interference in internal affairs. Attention was drawn to "suspect types" armed by a foreign power and imported in great numbers to Teheran to prepare for revolution. The most obvious point of criticism was, of course, the behavior of Kavtaradze and the Soviet oil demands. In an impressive declaration published in December, 1944, Seyyid Zia lashed the Soviet emissary and forcefully attacked Communist methods. He accused Russia of seeking *Lebensraum* and threatening Iranian integrity and expressed the conviction that no foreign intrigue would induce the Iranians to change their religion and loyalty.--

The strong stand taken by Seyyid Zia during the oil crisis increased his popularity and the number of his adherents. The resentment that many "independent" Iranian nationalists felt against him for his pro-British attitude gave way now to an appreciation of his political realism. Even for those who disliked the British *it* became more and more obvious that in the Big-Power rivalry in Iran the Russians were on the offensive and that unless Iran sought support from the West it eventually would share the fate of eastern Europe. Seyyid Zia himself seized this opportunity to expose his views more candidly. One of his papers made the following statement under the title, "What Is the Meaning of the Word 'Freedom'?"

There are two imperialisms: British and Soviet. The British imperialism does not seek further gains and is satisfied with the *status quo*. The Rus-

sian imperialism, on the contrary, desires to enlarge Russia's dominance. ... If our nation is resolved to resist illegal Soviet influence and its interference in internal affairs, Great Britain will certainly be faithful to her pledges and will defend Iran's independence. If, however, we shall cede without resistance before force, then Great Britain will also try to secure some gains for herself at the expense of Iran. If we allow our northern provinces to be overpowered by Communism, Great Britain will take over our southern provinces, and then Iran will be partitioned.<sup>13</sup>

12 *Ra'd-i-Ernruz*, Dec. 20, 1944. For text see Appendix no. IV. is *Sargozasht* (published temporarily in place of the suspended *Hurj*, Jan. 16, 1945-